

Viewing Collections: The Belasco Collection of Vending and Affixing Perfs

by John F. Dunn

On June 22, 2010 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries offered the Steven Belasco Collection of the United States Vending and Affixing Machine Perforations.

These “private” perforations were produced by stamp vending and affixing machine manufacturers. The Post Office Department provided them with imperforate sheets, and the manufacturers applied perforations for use in their machines. As the machines varied, so did the perforations, each of which is identified and illustrated in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue*. As with previous viewings, I have selected lots that are not necessarily the rarest or the most valuable, but those that present a cross-section of this specialized field.

The first lot in the auction was this 1¢ green, Brinkerhoff Company Type I (Sc. 314) center line block of four. The Brinkerhoff machine was designed to perforate only strips of stamps, so this block had to be folded between stamps in order to fit into the machine—and this is the only recorded block of any Brinkerhoff stamp.



Estimated at \$2,000-3,000, it sold for \$3,750. (All prices reported here do not include the 15% Buyers' Premiums that are added on to these hammer prices.)

Another interesting aspect of Vending and Affixing Machine perforations is usages on cover. As these usages were prevalent between 1906 and 1927, they take us back to a time when there was considerable experimentation, so the covers are often quite colorful and very collectible.

Here we see a 5¢ blue, Brinkerhoff Type I (Sc. 347), used with a 1¢ blue green with U.S. Automatic Vending Machine Type IA perforations

(Sc. 314) and a 2¢ Shield Imperforate (320) and 2¢ Alaska-Yukon Brinkerhoff Type IIA (Sc. 371), tied by “St. Louis Mo. Dec. 20, 1909” circular datestamps (c.d.s.) on a registered 2¢ entire to Charleston S.C., with a C. H. Mekeel return address, and a purple “Pine Lawn Mo. Registered Dec. 20, 1909” c.d.s.

This is the only recorded use of the 5¢ Brinkerhoff type I on cover, as well as being one of five or fewer covers with the Alaska-Yukon stamp with Brinkerhoff Type IIA. Estimated at \$5,000-7,500, it sold for \$4,500.



The Brinkerhoff Type II perforation style is represented here by a 2¢ Alaska-Yukon (Sc. 371) Brinkerhoff Type II pair coiled endwise. With a 2010 Scott Catalogue Value of \$650, it sold for \$700.

Although not visible in these images, a feature of the Brinkerhoff Type II is a thin slit between the perforations. Type II has one long thin slit; Type IIA

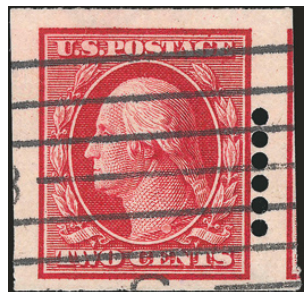
has two shorter slits.

The cover shown here bears a 2¢ scarlet, Brinkerhoff Type IIA (Sc.



320a) tied by a “Douglas Ariz. May 27, 1914” duplex cancel on a cover to C. H. Mekeel in St. Louis, also with a Mexico 5¢ stamp (Sc. 369) tied by “Nacozari, Sonora 26 May 1914” origination datestamps.

This is a unique usage of a Brinkerhoff stamp originating outside of the United States. It was sent during the Mexican civil war, with the 5¢ Mexico stamp paying postage to the border and the U.S. stamp paying the U.S. postage. Estimated at \$2,000-3,000, it realized \$850.



Next we view a 2¢ carmine (Sc. 384) with Farwell Group I, 6 Holes perforation, with full, intact holes at right. With an SCV of \$2,250, it fetched \$3,000.

One attention-grabbing lot was this 2¢ carmine (Sc. 384) Farwell Group 4, 4A4 or 4B4 (both are seen on this piece, with 4A4 having closer spacing between the perf holes than 4B4).

Estimated at \$750-1,000, it went for \$2,800.

Another Farwell perf variation is seen here in



a 2¢ carmine (Sc. 409) Farwell Group

5, 4A5 (4A5 indication a combination of 4 holes and 5 holes). Estimated at \$400-500, this stamp sold for \$300.



On page 4 we see a 2¢ scarlet (Sc. 320b) with International Vending Machine Co., perforated approximately 12-1/2 in a never hinged strip of four. As explained in the lot description, the International Vending



Machine Company installed their machines in post offices, using the 2¢ Shield stamp with their own 12-1/2 gauge perforations. The coils were replaced with the government coils in July 1908.

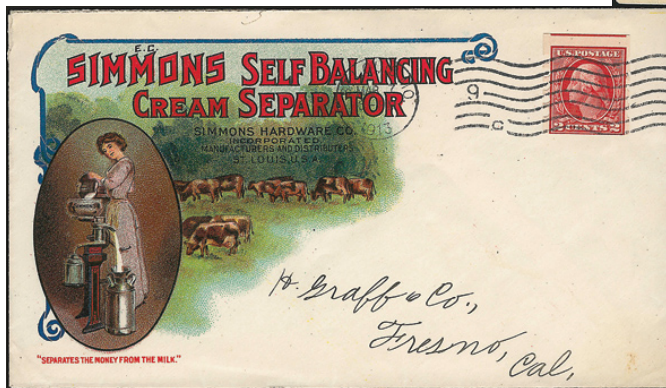
With an SCV of \$5,000, it sold for \$1,800.



A Mailometer Type III is seen here in a 4¢ orange brown (Sc. 346) pair with plate number and star selvage. With an SCV of \$450+ (the "+" being for the

plate number) it brought \$900.

No surprise, misperfs also can be found in this field. One example is this block of four of the 1¢ green (Sc. 383) in a Mailometer Type IV block of four misperforated and with perfs running in the wrong direction (horizontally instead of vertically). Estimated at \$400-500, it was hammered down for \$800.



The Mailometer Type IV is seen here on a 2¢ carmine (Sc. 409), tied by a "St. Louis Mo. Mar. 7, 1913" machine cancel on an advertis-

ing cover of the Simmons Self Balancing Cream Separator to Fresno, Cal. This beautiful commercial usage was estimated at \$300-400 and sold for \$800.

The best known private perforations may be those of the Schermack Company—before it became the Mailometer Company.

One of the more valuable of the Schermacks is seen here, a 5¢ blue (Sc. 315) with a Type II—much of the value being attributed to the stamps rather than the perfs. Described as “one of the most important of all the Private Vending Machine issues,” and believed to be one of only eight known pairs, it had a 2010 SCV of \$11,500, could do no better than \$4,500—and is valued at \$9,000 in the 2013 *Specialized*.



One of the rarest of all U.S. issues is the 1908 4¢ brown imperforate (Sc. 314A), all of which are found with Schermack Type III perforations. The example displayed here has large margins, but is thinned at the right. There are only 31 known used examples, so the stamp has an SCV of \$50,000 (in 2010 and in 2013), but because of the thinning, this example realized just \$26,000.



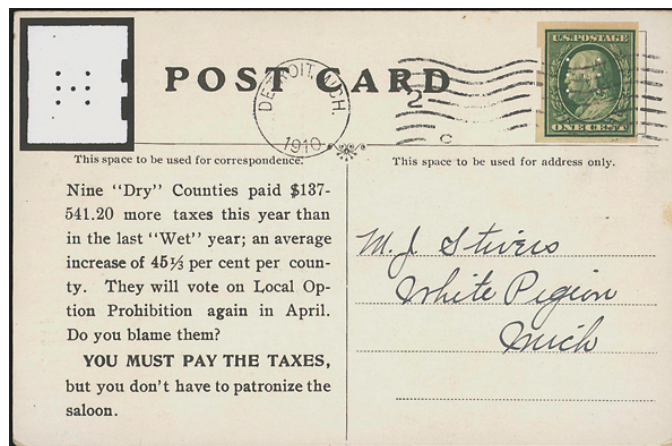
Another rarity is the 1916 2¢ deep rose Type Ia imperf (Sc. 482A), which also is only found with Schermack Type III perfs. The example here—one of 40 known—shows full perfs at the right and a small crease at the left. As explained in the lot description, “Scott 482A, like its more famous predecessor, Scott 314A, was issued imperforate by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and sold to the Schermack Company for use in its patented stamp-affixing machines. The Schermack “Sealer and Stamper” machine typically applied stamps

one at a time, and, in most cases, the hyphen-hole perfs on one side would be cut off....Most examples are either cut well into the design or have the Schermack perfs trimmed away on one side.

Schermack Type III stamps are often cut into the design by the oblong perforations or miscut with one side of the perforated margin missing....First, the sheets were perforated with the Schermack holes, creating an opportunity for misalignment between the stamps. Second, when the strip of stamps was fed through the Schermack affixing machine, the cutting blade did not always align with the space between stamps."

With a 2010 (and 2013) SCV of \$65,000, this stamp realized \$25,000.

Next we view a post card with a 1¢ green, Schermack Type III with Punch Control (Sc. 343 variety). The stamp is tied by a "Detroit Mich. 1910" machine cancel, and in the upper left we



see an illustration of the punch marks that was added to the card for illustrative purposes.

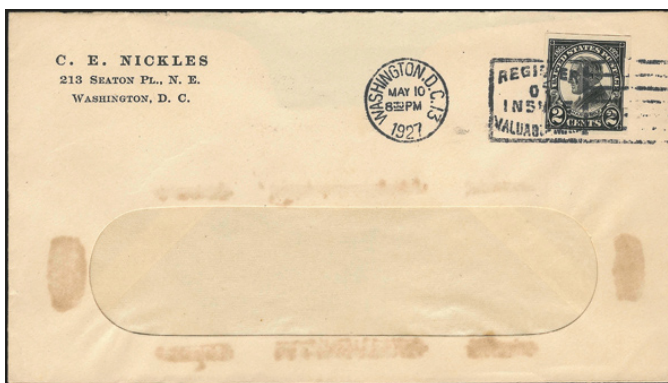
As explained in a subsequent lot description, "...the experiment started with a 12 pin die forming a square with letter designations from "A" through "L", after a short period of use the pins began to break off and fewer holes were punched into the stamps...."

With an SCV of \$500, this lot went for \$400.

On page 7 we show another Schermack Type III lot, this one a 2¢ Harding (Sc. 611) with clear Schermack perfs on both sides, tied by a "Washington D.C. May 10, 1927" machine slogan cancel on a glassine window cover with printed return address. This is one of only five covers with the

Harding Type III perfs. However, with an SCV of \$8,250, it could fetch no better than \$2,500—and the SCV is now \$6,000.

Next up is a 2¢ scarlet Die I (Sc. 319c) with U.S. Automatic Vending Experimental Coil in a vertical pair with a few perfs reinforced (visible behind the center set of perfs). As explained, “this experimental item was reportedly produced in early 1907 and was used in an existing machine which was used for tickets, the notches at the sides were produced by hand to aid in dispensing from the machine.” Estimated at \$1,000-1,500, this pair realized \$1,300.



We also find stamps from Canada with private perforations, one example being this NH pair of the Canada 1908 2¢ carmine with U.S. Automatic Vend-

ing Co. Type II (Untrade 90xxxv). The Untrade catalogue value without 50% premium for perfs clear and sound (which this pair has) was \$5,500—and that was the hammer price.

Shown at right

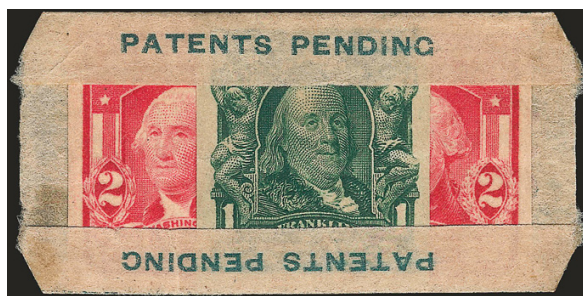


is a 2¢ carmine (Sc. 384) with U.S. Automatic Vending Co. Type II and III—Type II having a thin slit (not visible here, Type III having round hole perforations. Estimated at \$500-750, it realized \$2,600.

Next we see a 2¢ carmine pair (Sc. 459) with U.S. Automatic Vending Type III perforations. Only three unused pairs are known—and this was described as the finest of the three. Still, with a 2010 SCV of \$27,500, it went for \$14,500—and in 2013 it has a \$20,000 SCV.



These stamps also were sold through vending machines in pockets holding the stamps. Shown here is a U.S. Automatic Vending Co. Pocket Type 1-2 with a 1¢ blue green and two 2¢ scarlets (Sc. 314, 320b). The pocket has advertising on the back and is numbered “244”. With an SCV of \$2,900, it sold for \$950.



This next lot has a relatively common stamp, the 1906 1¢ green (Sc. 314), but it is a scarce example on card with the U.S. Automatic Vending Co. Type I, tied by a “Madison Sq. Sta. N.Y. Nov. 27, 1908” machine cancel. As explained in the lot description, “The machine was tested at Madison Square Station in November and December of 1908 and this is



one of those used during that brief time.” With an SCV of \$2,100, it realized \$2,600—and has a 2013 SCV of \$2,750.

This strip with the odd “perforations”—if you can call them that—shows the 1¢ green (Sc. 343) with Attleboro Stamp Co. Private Perforations. It is a rare original gum strip with these perforations and is hard to find intact. With an SCV of \$3,000 and was hammered down for \$3,250.



Another error lot is seen at the left, a 1¢ green (Sc. 343 variety) with Attleboro Stamp Co. Private Perforations at top of bottom, but Imperforate Between—the only recorded One Cent with Attleboro perfs that is imperf between. Estimated at \$3,000-4,000, it went for \$3,500.



We conclude with two Test Coil lots. First we see the Schermack Type III brown Test stamp (Sc.

TD14) on a cover with yellow and black label advertising the Chicago Business Show at the Coliseum Sept. 8-13, 1913—estimate \$100-150, realization \$475.

Finally, we view a U.S. Automatic Vending Co. dark red Coil Test pair with no denomination and Type I perforations (Sc. TD24). estimate \$200-300, hammer price \$375.

